

Adamkus Asks Miller of US to Increase Attention to Jewish Gravesite Management

Vilnius, Oct 14 (ELTA) - Lithuanian head of state Valdas Adamkus urged a visiting Chairman of the US commission for heritage in foreign countries Warren Miller to step up the preservation of Jewish gravesites in the Baltic state, as they met in Vilnius Monday.

Miller highlighted the activities of his commission and goals of the visit to Lithuania. Both men talked about conservation of the cultural and historical heritage of nations affected by occupation in Lithuania.

Adamkus encouraged the US official to contribute to the funding of joint projects. After the interview Miller sounded optimistic saying he hoped for the resolving of cultural heritage problems through cooperation of both countries.

The US and Lithuania plan to establish their cooperation by outlining vulnerable points in cultural heritage and protecting them jointly. On Tuesday, Miller and Lithuanian Culture Minister Roma Dovydeniene will sign an agreement governing joint work in this field. The agreement will bind both parties to carry out activities geared towards preservation of the cultural heritage of all national, religious or ethnic groups residing in their territories, including victims of World War Two. It will cover protection of gravesites, monuments, churches and documents of Jews, Gypsies and Old Believers.

Asked by reporters as to why US holds interest in this agreement, Miller said that "US is the country of immigrants which is home for a numerous Lithuanian community which cares very much about their heritage in Lithuania gravesites, monuments and memorials erected in massacre sites".

To implement the accord, both countries will set up a joint US-Lithuanian heritage commission which will supervise the work.

Miller, staying in Vilnius on October 13 to 16, met Monday the director of international commission for investigation of Nazi and Soviet occupations' crimes in Lithuania Ronaldas Racinkas. Also on the agenda are interviews with the officials of the Culture Ministry and Vilnius University.